

Michigan Freedom Trail Commission Meeting Minutes

Via Conference Call

December 8, 2017

Commissioners on conference call: Amanda Campbell, Roy Finkenbine, Juanita Moore, Edwina Murphy, Robin Peebles, David Teeter, Rev. Kevin Turman

Excused: Rochelle Danquah, Michael Nassaney

Absent: Ronald Brown

Staff: Sandra Clark, Mary Patrick, Tobi Voigt

1. **Call to Order:** The December 8 meeting was held via conference call. Chair Finkenbine called the meeting to order at 11:07 a.m.
2. **Agenda:** Reverend Turman moved to approve the agenda as presented; Moore seconded the motion. Reverend Turman then moved to add "Nominating Committee" under Action Items; Teeter seconded the motion, and the revised agenda was approved unanimously.
3. **Public Comments:** None
4. **Approval of Minutes:** Teeter moved to approve the October 3, 2017, meeting minutes as submitted; Campbell seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved unanimously.
5. **Action Items:**
 - a. **Regional Collaboration:** Bringing local efforts together to promote regional collaboration, create alliances, and expand partnerships for grant application, education, and cultural tourism. By hosting a statewide event, the FTC could create the framework for building synergies, conversations, and buy-in to create a statewide community.

Finkenbine and Juanita Moore will meet in January to explore the possibility of the Wright Museum being the institutional anchor to begin fostering collaboration and partnerships between Michigan's sites and people. Finkenbine also plans to meet with Greg Roberts, Director for the Ohio River National Freedom Corridor, to learn about their formation process, success, tourism, collaboration, and public awareness efforts. Finkenbine suggested that he, Campbell and Clark meet to focus on this topic prior to the next meeting in February. A discussion was held about other potential cultural institutional partners, and FTC members were asked to submit ideas to Finkenbine or Patrick so they can begin to compile a list.
 - b. **Network to Freedom nominations:** Reverend Turman will ask the Reverend Lottie Jones-Hood about the status of the Second Baptist Church nomination.
 - c. **2018 Meeting Schedule and Locations:** The 2018 meeting schedule was set (all are on Fridays at 11:00 AM, in Lansing at the Michigan History Center, unless otherwise noted): February 9, 2:30 PM, University of Detroit Mercy; May 25, Lansing;

September 7, Lansing; November 16, Lansing. Finkenbine suggested that the Commission hold its February 9 meeting at the University of Detroit Mercy to coincide with a talk being given by Dr. Tiya Miles, author of *Dawn of Detroit: A Chronicle of Slavery and Freedom in the City of the Straits*. The regular meeting of the Commission will begin at 2:30 PM, there will be a break for dinner, and members will return to University of Detroit by 5:30 PM to hear Dr. Miles.

- d. **Nominating Committee:** Finkenbine appointed a nominating committee of Peebles, Teeter and Turman. They will let Patrick know in advance of their decision, and will report at the February meeting.

6. Reports

- a. **Staff:** Clark reported that she has asked Tobi Voigt to become involved with the FTC and she will attend meetings. Clark has suggested that the Michigan Historical Commission work with the FTC on Michigan Historical Markers related to the underground railroad. The commission and community members will be invited to a discussion led by Museum Director Suzanne Fisher about the new long-term exhibit that will include stories about the underground railroad and free black communities between 1815 and 1865. Dr. Michelle Johnson has been working on this exhibit.
- b. **Chairperson:** Finkenbine is looking forward to participating in Detroit's 20th century civil rights project with Quinn Evans Architects to create a tour or tours of sites within the city boundaries of Detroit. They will identify and research sites, and include up to 30 at a time in a tour, with an eye to stimulating heritage tourism.
- c. **Vice Chairperson:** None
- d. **Commissioner Reports:** None
- e. **Standing Committee Updates:**
 - Cultural and Heritage Tourism (Peebles, Teeter): Peebles said the director of Travel Michigan was the keynote speaker for the Southeast Tourism Society's annual fall conference. "Travel South" includes Gulf Coast states that are working collaboratively to promote regional tourism that may include a downloadable map. Peebles suggested that Michigan might collaborate with them and Finkenbine suggested that Peebles and Clark begin moving forward with the preliminaries.

7. New Business: None

8. News and Announcements: None.

- 9. **Adjourn Meeting:** Moore moved to adjourn the meeting; Campbell seconded the motion, and the meeting was adjourned at 11:56 PM.

Sandra S. Clark, Executive Secretary